

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2677

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV ELAB SHUM TS
SUBJ: JANUARY 26 CACUALTY LIST PUBLISHED

1. AL-AMAL, PSD ARABIC LANGUAGE DAILY, PUBLISHED IN ITS APRIL 11 EDITION LIST OF FIFTY-ONE PERSONS WHO DIED DURING OR AS RESULT OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN JAN 26 RIOTS. UNACCOUNTABLY, NO REFERENCE TO LIST HAS BEEN MADE IN PARTY'S FRENCH LAGUAGE DAILY, L'ACTION, OR IN ANY OTHER TUNISIAN PUBLICATIONS.

2. AL-AMAL EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS PRINTING LIST OF VICTIMS IN ORDER TO PUT AN END TO EXAGGERATED ACCOUNTS O DEAD BEING SPREAD BY AHMED MESTIRI, WHO RECETNLY STATED IN LONON PRESS CONVERENCE THAT NUMBER EXCEEDED 140. LIST GAVE ONLY NAMES AND DATES OF DEATH (FROM JANUARY 26 TO FEBRUARY 14) OF FIFTY-ONE FICTIMS AND IS SOMEWHAT LARGER THAN FORTY-SIX PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED.

2. AL-AMAL EDITORIAL APRIL 12 REPEATED IDEAS EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS DAYS ARTICLE, AND FURTHER ELABORATED ON PLITICALLY MOTIVATED LIES BEING SPREAD BY AHMED MESTIRI IN HIS CURRENT TOUR OF U.S. AND IN VRIOUS EUROPEAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES.

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3. COMMENT: PSD DORECTOR MOHAMED SAYAH TOLD US SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT CASUALTY LIST WOULD SOON BE PUBLISHED AS PART OF GOVERNMENT/PARTY "WHITE PAPER" ON EVENTS OF JAN 26. WE HAVE SEEN DRAFT OF THIS PAPER AND ITS MAIN FOCUS IS IN FIXING ACHOUR AND COMPANY'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR JANUARY UPRISINGS AS PART OF PLAN TO UNDERMINE REGIMEM

WHITE PAPER HAS NOT BEEN CIRCULATED TO EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE,
BUT CASUALTY LIST WILL CERTAINLY BE PRESENTED AS PART OF
GOVERNMENT'S CASE AGAINST ACHOUR AND HIS SUPPORTERS.
GOVERNMENT ALSO PERHAPS HOPES THAT PUBLICATION OF LIST
WILL TAKE SOME WIND OUT OF MISTITI'S SAILS. IN ADDITION,
IT COULD SERVE AS BASIS FOR EVENTUALL CHARGES AGAINST
MESTIRI FOR SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION.
MULCAHY

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